

THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 106

The truly highbrow rag for people who can read...April Fools issue

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Photos: Improv Everywhere & BuzzFeed



Seeing Eye People Help Pedestrians Text Safely



Following release of data on the dangers of texting while walking by the American Foam Padding Association, WalkBoston and AAA Southern New England are teaming to do something to stop the idiotic practice. With the number of accidents caused by texting while walking has doubled over the last two years, WalkBoston and AAA are developing a multi-pronged effort of education, enforcement, and assistance to keep people safe on Boston streets. WalkBoston is developing a sidewalk stencil that admonishes pe-

destrians to "look up!" with a gentle reminder that Boston motorists aren't the best. AAA will distribute a short, 30-minute video on proper street crossing techniques and the importance of eye contact. The most promising tool that will be introduced during National Safety Month in June will be the Seeing Eye Person, a guide to help you navigate safely as you walk and text. Just grab hold of the leash that connects you to your guide (the one of you with the orange vest and the brain) and you'll be safely escorted anywhere in the city.

New Proposals for Raising Revenue

Sitting in his office admiring the draperies, Gov. Petulant is able to shut out the din of the Transportation Finance Commission, economists, experts from the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy and the general public. The first result was the \$1.9 billion tax hike that is now a distant memory/nightmare.

Holed up again, incommunicado with realists and others with good ideas, Gov. Petulant dreamed up a new plan to raise revenue. This one is more creative and includes proposals put forth in past years by the wacko Boston Informer pundits.

- MBTA fares would be based on quality of service, not distance. Riders wanting to arrive on time will pay a 50% higher fare.
- Since people will practically cash in their 401(k) to park at Fenway Park, they'll be willing to blow a wad to park at the State House. Charge \$100 to park for two hours on Boston Common.
- Raise the cost of a driver's license to \$1,000. This will raise revenue and discourage many from getting a license and will help meet MassDOT's goal for "mode shift."
- If you afford it, you can afford to pay a premium to park it. Owners of Lamborghini, Jaguar, Bugatti, Ferrari and Lexus cars will be charged a \$20 premium to park in a public garages.
- To mollify those fearful they will get lost if the MBTA adopts corporate stations names, the plan calls for selling naming rights to government buildings instead. No need for both a building and tunnel named for Tip O'Neill; sell naming rights to the O'Neill federal building at North Station.

Push for Mayor

Expecting a crush of candidates on May 13 at the filing deadline, Boston Election Department officials did not staff up to handle the swarm of candidates who have recently taken out papers to run for Mayor. The surge of interest in being King, er, Mayor is unprecedented, far greater than the nine-candidate feeding frenzy in 1983 when Kevin White chose not to run again.

With two weeks before the filing deadline, Election Department officials report 124 candidates for Mayor. Printing all the names on the ballot is going to be a challenge. The Election Department is proposing to simply jot the names on a blackboard and hang it at the polls. Voters would simply mark the corresponding number on their normal size ballot.

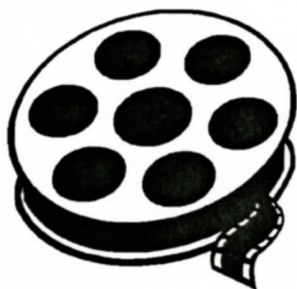


Movies Not to Miss!

42 – A documentary about all the candidates running for Mayor of Boston.

UNDER THE SEA – A thrilling drama playing out as storms flood the waterfront and the Blue Line, with thousands running in panic to high ground in the North End

OLYMPUS HAS FALLEN – a biography of the final years of Tom Menino as Mayor of Boston.



UPSTREAM COLOR – a detective story as the Environmental Police track polluting criminals.

MENAGE A TROIS – the spicy story of the secret meetings of Governor Patrick, Speaker DeLeo and Senate President Murray for mutual satisfaction with the budget.

COMPLICITY – a courtroom drama about the FBI's refusal to admit to

aiding and abetting Whitey Bulger's crimes.

OBLIVION – a documentary about the fate of all efforts to get the Legislature to pass a properly funded long-range plan for transportation and infrastructure maintenance, repair and improvement.

The Future of the Greenway

MassDOT continues to threaten to eliminate funding for the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway as it sees no change in its financial condition in sight. Faced with more borrowing to pay salaries, the electric bill, and bridge repairs, eliminating Greenway funding has been put on the table. In response, the Greenback Conservancy has come up with several proposals to replace the lost MassDOT funding should it be eliminated.

Linda Joyous of the Greenback Conservancy, a former Mass. Highway Department, dug up the 1990 Boston Society of Architects (BSA) Plan for the land above the Central Artery tunnel. The BSA proposed so much development ("to heal the scar" from the elevated highway) that finding open space was as hard as finding Waldo. Joyous said they could finance what was left of the Greenway by selling development rights to the Greenway parcels.

Other ideas included asking Medford native and New York Mayor Bloomberg if he was interested in naming rights; building on former Greenback Conservancy director Nancy Brahmin's "fun" theme (the unique carousel).

Joyous said the Conservancy researched the revenue potential from entertainment venues. She said the mumbo jumbo from the industry experts says these



entertainment or amusement parks survive because of the critical mass of highly stimulating activities and agglomeration of greasy food. A rendering of a big revenue-generating program—a Greenway amusement park—is shown below.

Fit for a King

A Committee of the Commission on Public Art, a section within the Boston Department of Memorials and Commemorative Statues and Plaques, has been hard at work crafting the appropriate public piece to honor Mayor Menino upon his departure from City Hall.

Menino's unprecedented 20 years in office left the Committee scratching its heads trying to sum up the Mayor's legacy. One idea, renaming part of the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway for Menino, was advancing quickly until someone pointed out the City didn't contribute a dime to develop and maintain the Greenway.

Other ideas also had issues;

- **Renaming the renovated Northern Avenue Bridge** after Menino—rejected because after umpteen years under his watch the project is still not moving forward
- Several members were pushing re-branding the So. Bay Harbor Trail "Tommy's Trail" to finally get the bike path fixed after 10 years of no action. Idea was dropped when they realized there still is no real schedule to get it done.
- The idea of calling the Surface Road next to the Greenway the "Menino Mile" was dropped when it was noted the Kennedy family could object to eliminating the venerable John F. Fitzgerald Surface Road

The Committee, desperate for something that would capture the essence of Menino over these long years, recommended this statue, noting it would certainly best anything Mayor Bloomberg dreams up in New York City.



Proposed statue of Menino, the Green Mayor

Runner-Up Options



Hubway Boat Share

A perfect storm of Longfellow Bridge construction, sea-level rise and hefty federal operating subsidies has resulted in brand-new water transportation in Boston. State Transportation Secretary Richard Daffy announced the start of Hubway Boat Share at the first two docking locations at the Gridley Dam locks near No. Station (pictured) and Fanny Pier in So. Boston.

Despite hysteria over bike-share riders not wearing helmets and not knowing the rules of the road, little concern has been expressed about novice boaters driving high-powered motor boats. "No problem. If you can ride a bike in Boston you can drive one of these toy boats," Sec. Daffy said.

As an incentive to spur boat-share users, MassDOT will close all lanes of the Longfellow Bridge, the Red Line and the Silver Line. "We think it will be kind of fun to see people flocking to the boat share when everything else is closed," Daffy said.



New Hubway boat share at the Charles River Dam

What's Up?

City Hall to Feature Dual-Purpose Detection Screening—

After listening to New York City Mayor Bloomberg's incessant calls for New Yorkers to get healthier, Mayor Menino decided to one-up Bloomberg and implement an X-ray health screening that would automatically be done upon entering City Hall and other City buildings with metal detectors. Menino's plan would be a revenue generator, too, as X-rays taken during the metal screening will be sent to the visitor's doctor and billed accordingly.

Slightly embarrassed by the failure of his "Boston Moves for Health" campaign for Bostonians to lose 1 million pounds, Menino's new initiative will make him look like a genius. Taking a swing at Bloomberg for trying to restrict the size of sodas in New York City, Menino's X-ray screening will simply record the healthy Bostonians, ignore the rest, and allow Menino to collect on a bet with Bloomberg (Boston fried clams or New York cheesecake) for the healthiest residents.

Boston Prepares for Global Warming and Sea-Level Rise—

Increasingly frequent and fierce storms and higher and higher tides due to global warming make parts of Boston including the Wharf District and Back Bay vulnerable to flooding.

To cope, the Boston City Council has proposed the following ordinances.

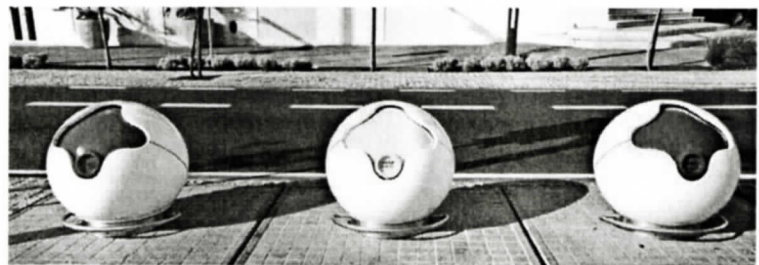
1. All cars bought from now on to be garaged in the affected areas must be amphibious vehicles
2. Power boats, but not sailing boats, will be allowed on all streets and in tunnels during flooding. Speed limits will still be in force.
3. Fishing will only be allowed on side streets.
4. Swimming will only be allowed in bicycle lanes.
5. If traffic signals aren't functioning, vehicles and boats traveling with the tidal flow will have the right of way.



Headlines You'll Never Read

- ✓ Gov. admits So. Coast Rail is a ploy for votes; won't be built
- ✓ Don Chiofaro to chair Menino 'Fond Farewell Party' committee
- ✓ MassDOT Sec. Davey admits he doesn't understand Greenway financing
- ✓ Theatre District Hub Ticket site construction begins
- ✓ Former Transport Sec. Salvucci makes a short statement
- ✓ Menino promotes Readville casino
- ✓ City subsidizes Innovation District micro-unit rents

What is This?



Be the first to correctly identify the objects above and win a valuable prize. This is harder than it appears. Clues may or may not be helpful.

- Iberian urban hardware
- Spanish street objects
- Blue, yellow and green

Send guesses to The Boston Informer at bostoninformer@cs.com. "Valuable prize" is a subjective term. Last year's winner, Trixie Watson, sent photos from her prize trip to Rochester, NY, via Greyhound bus; see www.bostoninformer.com for highlights from her trip.

THE **Mis** BOSTON INFORMER

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A lame duck only physically, Mayor Menino, with a passion for words, discovers a segue to retirement:



"Boston will be a leader with Segway lanes, Segway boxes, Segway share and Segway parking!"

You Were Asking

- Q.** After the excellent Boston Globe Spotlight Team review of the Boston taxi situation, will the cost of medallions go down, drop to no cost, or be doled out to preferential political donors.
- A.** Maybe, no and yes.
- Q.** The BRA hired a consultant late last year to evaluate Downtown Crossing's pushcarts, signage and the pedestrian zone. But before the study had accomplished anything, the Business Improvement District tried to kick out the pushcarts. How could the BID know what the study was going to conclude?
- A.** Dear naive reader, it appears there may have been a predisposition to ditching the pushcarts.
- Q.** I heard a rumor that the MBTA is going to capitalize on the fact that the pope, when he was Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, used public transportation. What is the MBTA doing?
- A.** The rumor says the MBTA is starting an ad campaign, "Follow the Pope—Take the Bus!"
- Q.** Is it true that the micro-apartments everyone is talking about are so small they don't even have room for a desk and a coffee maker?
- A.** It is true for some. Those units, called "Starbucks shacks," are conveniently located above a coffee shop, aka "study hall."
- Q.** It's been almost 10 years since the elevated Green Line was removed at North Station. Causeway Street looks like a disaster. Why?
- A.** Causeway Street was thrown into the Crossroads Program with 11 other streets. The program is taking so long the website expired. One street has been completed. At this rate it will take 39 years to reconstruct all the Crossroads streets.
- Q.** What are all these Lamborghini cars doing in the downtown?
- A.** Boston has apparently outgrown Duck Tours. Replacing Duck Tours are Lamborghini tours during which guests skip the history of Boston and enjoy a thrill ride in the sports car.